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Action SS

Info

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DE RUMJIR 519 1881220
ZNY SSSSS
O R 0712007 JUL 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
RUHHHQA/CINCPAC
STATE GRNC
BT
S E C R E T SAIGON 519

EXCISE

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1967 JUL 7 AM 8 35

SAIGON 519, 7-767

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EXDIS

REF: STATE 1962; SAIGON 418

1. WE ARE SENDING TEXT OF COMPLAINT AGAINST CANDIDACY OF BIG MINH BY SEPTEL. IT DOES NOT REALLY MAKE A CASE AGAINST MINH'S CANDIDACY IN LEGAL TERMS, BUT IN EFFECT SIMPLY STATES THAT THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT OPPOSES HIS RETURN AND HIS CANDIDACY.

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2. ALTHOUGH THE LETTER DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO MAKE ANY CASE AGAINST MINH'S RETURN, WE HAVE A [ ]WHICH CONTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT THE REASONS THE GENERALS MAY USE IN PRESSING THEIR COMPLAINT BEHIND THE SCENES. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT [ ] THE FACTORS IN THE ORIGINAL DECISION AGAINST MINH'S RETURN INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING: MINH'S RETURN TO VIET NAM WOULD OCCASION DEMANDS TO RETURN ON THE PART OF OTHER GENERALS IN EXILE, MINH'S RUNNING MATE IS CONSIDERED TO BE A COMMUNIST OR COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZER (HE IS ALLEGED TO BE AN OLD FRIEND OF NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT LEADER NGUYEN HUU THO AND TO HAVE BEEN ENOVLVED IN A COMMUNIST PEACE MOVEMENT IN 1954;), MINH'S BROTHER IS A VIET CONG (VC) GENERAL, THICH TRI QUANG IS PREPARING TO USE MINH'S CANDIDACY TO STIR UP TROUBLE, AND MINH'S RETURN COULD CAUSE DISSENSION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. SOME OF THESE POINTS WERE MENTIONED TO POLITICAL COUNSELOR TODAY BY GEN. CAO VAN VIEN.

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3. THE MILITARY APPEAR UNITED ON THIS ISSUE, AND IN THE PAST THEY HAVE HAD THEIR WAY WITH THE ASSEMBLY WHEN THEY PRESENTED A UNITED FRONT. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER [ ] COMMENTED TO AN EMBOFF TODAY THAT HE EXPECTS THE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Jon Egeberg DATE 10/7/81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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DIRECTORATE AND THE MILITARY TO USE ALL MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO PRESSURE THE CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL AND THE ASSEMBLY INTO DISQUALIFYING MINH. HE OBSERVED THAT THE PRESTIGE OF THE ARMY IS NOW ENGAGED IN THIS MATTER. HE OPINION IS PROBABLY SHARED BY MANY OF THE ASSEMBLY DEPUTIES.'
OF THE MRS BLOOOC IN THE ASSEMBLY, THIS AFTERNOON TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT'] BLOC WILL ONLY MAKE A SHOW OF OPPOSITION OF THE ELECTION COUNCIL GOES ALONG WITH THE DIRECTORATE ON THIS QUESTION. HE SAID THAT BASICALLY THE MRS DOES NOT DISAGREE WITH THE DIRECTORATE'S POSITION, AND THEY WILL ONLY MAKE STATEMENTS IN FAVOR OF MINH'S CANDIDACY FOR THE RECORD AND THEN GO ALONG WITH THE DIRECTORATE.

4. THERE IS ALSO A COMPLAINT AGAINST LIANG'S CANDIDACY. AN EASY WASY OUT MIGHT BE TO DISQUALIFY THE SLATE BECAUSE OF LIANG'S ALLEGED FRENCH CITIZENSHIP, IF THIS ALLEGATION IS SUSTAINED.

5. THE ELECTION COUNCIL MEETS TOMORROW AND MUST PRESENT ITS REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY BY JULY 15. PRESUMABLY THERE WILL BE

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MUCH MANEUVERING BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE MEANTIME. WE WILL OF COURSE SEEK FURTHER INFORMATION AND REACTION ON THIS ISSUE AS THE COUCIL DELIBERATES ON IT.

6. WE CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT BIG MINH'S CANDIDACY IS A THREAT TO MILITARY UNITY AND THAT IT WOULD BE BEST IF HE WERE NOT A CANDIDATE, FOR THE REASONS POINTED OUT IN PARA 5 OF SAIGON 418. THE DIRECTORATE APPEARS TO BE MOVING AHEAD ON A CLEAR COURSE WHICH MAY BE SUPPORTED OR ACCEPTED BY OTHER ELEMENTS AND WE SEE NO REASON TO INTERVENE AND MANY REASONS NOT TO GET INVOLVED.

7. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO CONFIRM SUU'S REMARKS ABOUT MINH'S ALLEGED MISBEHAVIOR.

8. WE CAN SEE ADVANTAGES IN CONTACTING BIG MINHDIRECTLY TO GET HIS VIEWS, BUT WOULD PREFER TO DEFER SUCH AN APPROACH UNTIL WE HAVE A LITTLE CLEARER VIEW OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE SITUATION IS DEFELOPING HERE. ANY SUCH APPROACH COULD, OF COURSE, BE MISINTERPERPRETED OR EXPLOITED BY BIG MINH NO MATTER WHAT IS SAID.

BUNKER

NOTE: PASSED S/S-O, WHITE HOUSE 7-7-67 8:44 a.m.

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